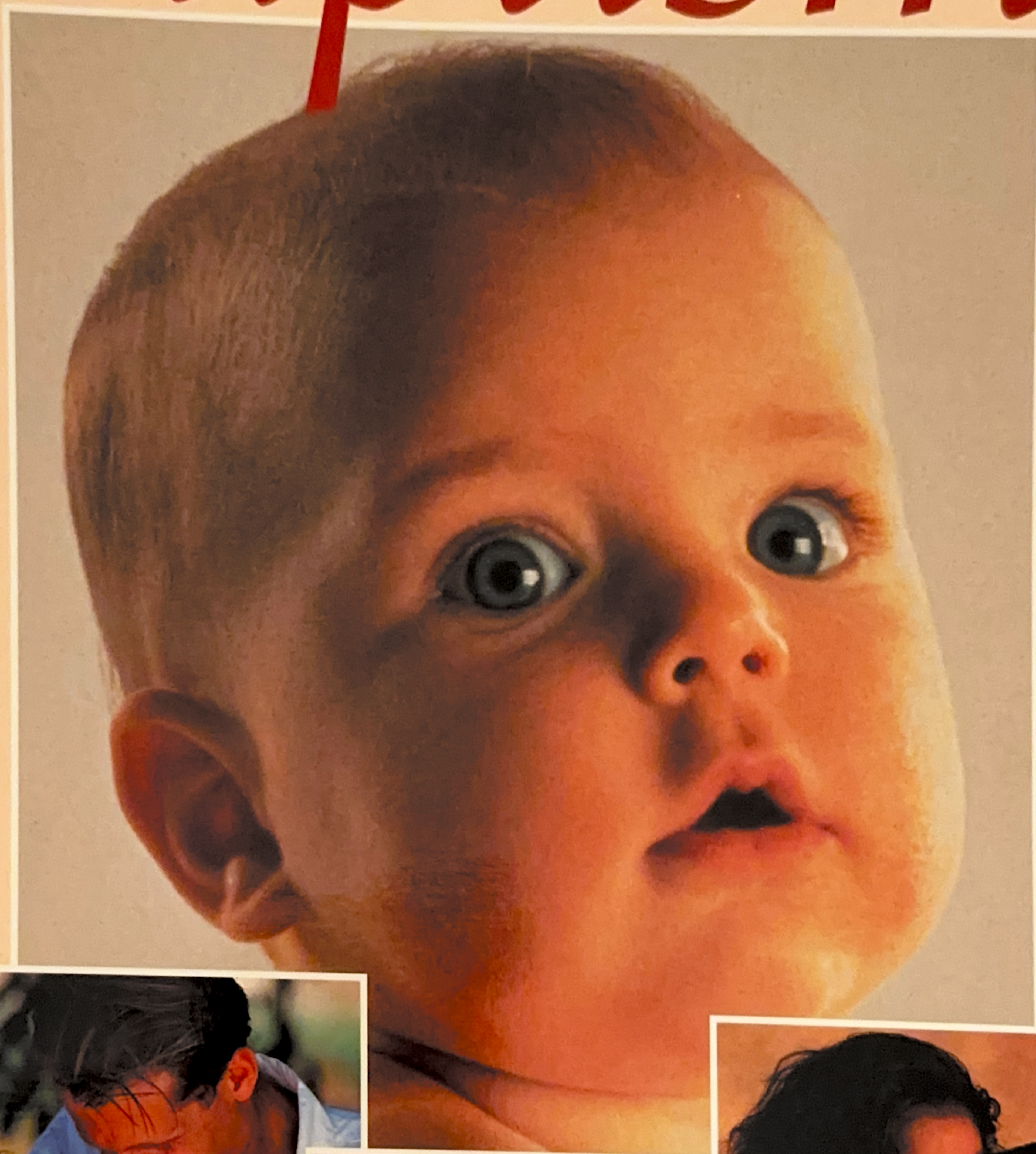


*your
baby's*
Baptism



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Text: Rosemary Gallagher
John Trenchard, C.S.R.
Design: Louise Hilton, Jellly

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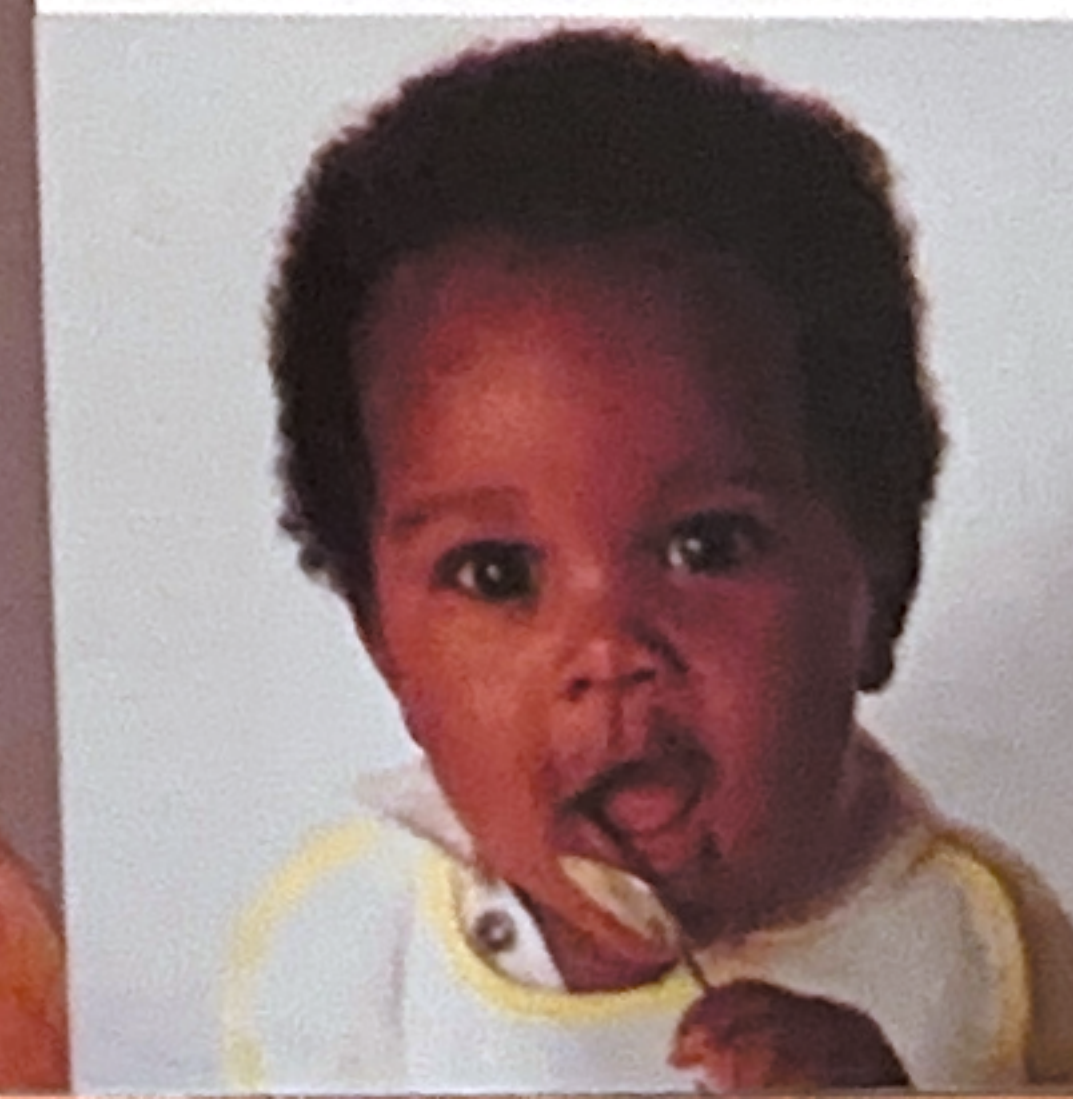
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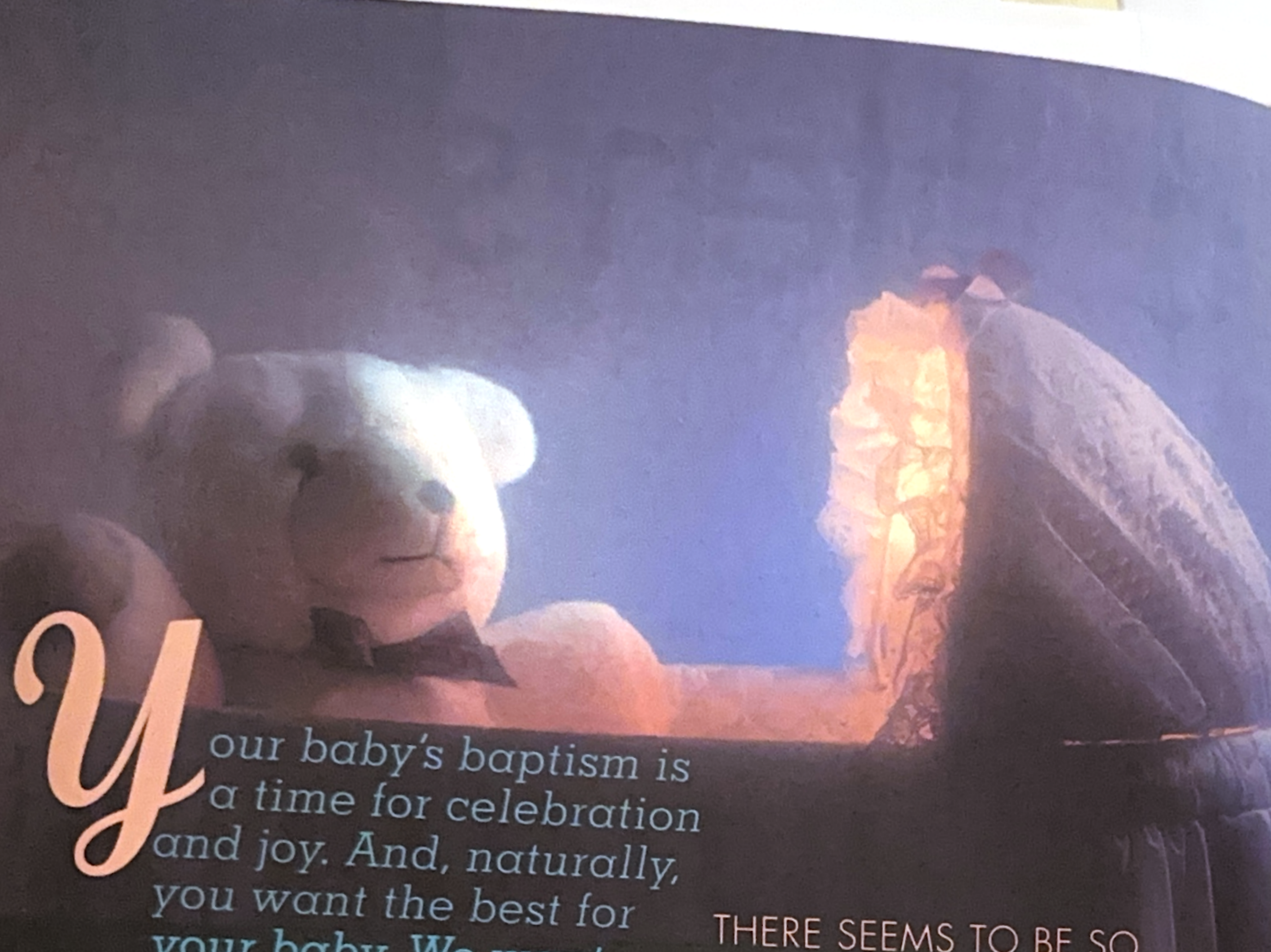
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Your baby's baptism is a time for celebration and joy. And, naturally, you want the best for your baby. We want to help you plan and prepare for the baptism in the best possible way.

will the baby be completely healthy, what if the baby is twins? Then, all of a sudden, there is chaos. The baby finally arrives and there is no time to think. There is so much to get done.

Some people think of baptism simply as something else to "get done." That's very sad. For baptism is a birth into the Christian community and is in every way as solemn and important as birth itself. It's an event that needs to be prepared for.

YOUR FAITH IS IMPORTANT

Your most important preparation is to look at your own faith. Your baby will be born with your features and will pick up your mannerisms. As he or she gets older your child will also pick up your faith. That is why, when you approach the Church about having your child baptized you will be encouraged to think through your own faith and the part it plays in your life.

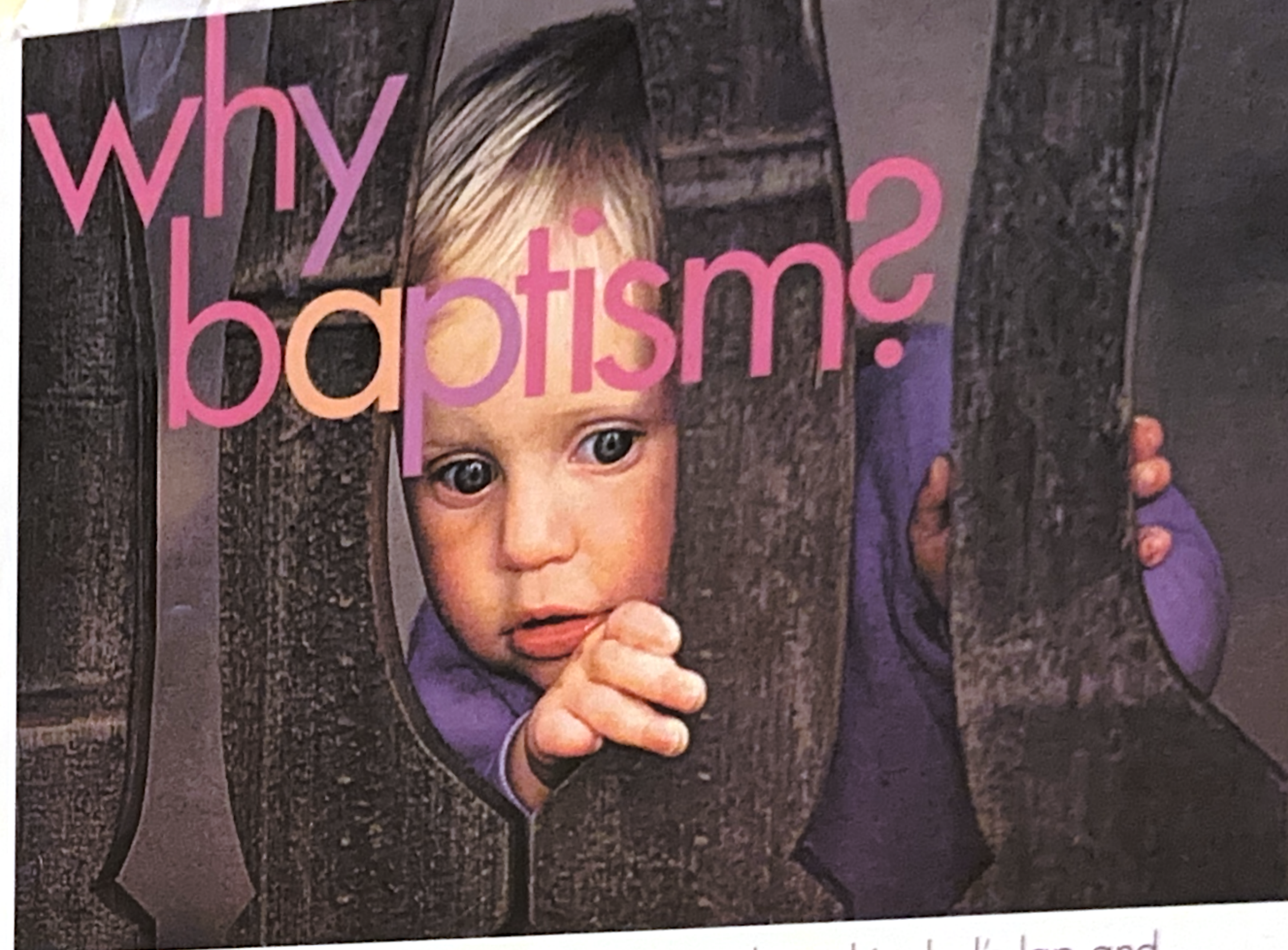
The very fact that you have asked to have your baby baptized shows that you recognize the importance of God in your life. From the earliest days children too young to answer for themselves have been baptized, usually as they accompanied their parents into the Church. For the Church recognizes the desire of Christian parents to share the life of Christ with their children. Jesus Christ, like you, wants the best for your child.

GROWING IN GOD'S LOVE

Your efforts will not only help your baby to grow up in the love of God, they will also help you to grow. As you teach your child to pray you yourself will deepen your prayer; as you teach your child to appreciate the Mass your own faith will be enriched. Your baby's baptism is only the beginning of a new life in which you will grow closer to one another in the family and closer to God. The Church welcomes your child into its midst with love and prayers for the peace and happiness of your family in the years ahead.

THERE SEEMS TO BE SO MUCH TO DO

It's likely that at the moment you are concerned about the birth of your baby. Either it's an event you are waiting for, or you are still recovering from it. Before the baby arrives there is so much to think about: where will the baby sleep, what will the baby wear,



Ben came home from nursery school, jumped into his dad's lap and asked: "Where did I come from?" Dad cleared his throat and attempted a simple—but complete—answer to his son's question. Ben was slightly fidgeting by the time his dad finished. "Well," he said, "I just wondered because Mary said she came from Birmingham."

GOD'S LOVE FOR YOUR CHILD

The misunderstanding between Dad and Ben was rather like the misunderstanding at a secret meeting between Jesus and a leading Jew called Nicodemus. Jesus said that unless we are born from above we cannot see the kingdom of God. Naturally, Nicodemus was puzzled. He asked if a grown man or woman could really go back into the mother's womb and be born again?

The answer to that question is obvious. A mother goes through great pains to give birth to a baby who is alive and kicking. Nothing can put the baby back into the womb. But Jesus goes on to tell us that this baby isn't just our child. Our baby is also God's child. And God, too, went to enor-

mous pains—even to dying on the cross for us—to show us how much every child of God's is loved.

Jesus knows that such love has to be seen to be believed. And baptism is the sign, or sacrament, that he gives us to show his love. Some people think that we have to be baptized to show our belief in God. In a sense, that's true. But baptism is far more than that. It shows God's belief in us.

THE SMILE OF GOD

When you smile at your baby it brings him or her to life: your baby starts to chuckle and to wriggle. God's smile comes in baptism. It is the sign that every sin is forgiven, and that we are precious and valued. And that really is a rebirth. It gives us new life. It makes it

possible for us to start again.

This is why some people compare the water of baptism to the womb; others compare it to the tomb in which Jesus himself was laid. When your child emerges from the water, it is like being born again. This time, however, it isn't with the life you have given, but with the life—the Spirit—of Jesus, who now looks forward to receiving your child into eternal life.

Jesus goes on to tell us that this baby isn't just our child. Our baby is also God's child.

The first thing you do after your baby is born is to start loving your baby. You kiss your baby, you hug your baby, you feed your baby. Usually, you hardly think about what you are doing. You simply love your child. And, as you do so, you help your baby to grow into a mature, loving adult—as one of the family. There will come the day when you can talk to him or her almost as an equal.

If these little signs of love are lacking, we know the consequences to be disastrous. If a parent starves a baby of love, the child grows up quite unlovable.

BEFORE BAPTISM

Our heavenly Father shows his love for us in the same way as you show your love for your child—by signs and gestures. And the ceremony of baptism is full of them. The most important of these signs is the pouring of the water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This sign of love is God's way of recreating your child in the divine image, making him or her one of the family.

You and God love in the same way—by signs and gestures. Your love and God's love have the same effect—they make your baby lovable and draw your child into the family. There will come the day when God, like yourself, can talk to this child almost as an equal.

YOUR FAITH—YOUR CHILD'S FAITH

It's important that you and your partner basically agree on the way your baby is to be brought up; otherwise, the child will suffer. In the same way, it's important that parents and God agree on how they are going to love their child. That is why, right at the beginning of the ceremony, you are asked if you clearly understand that you are:

"accepting the responsibility of training your child in the practice of the faith and of bringing up your child to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor?"

It's important that the question is answered honestly.

This doesn't mean that if you have failed in the practice of the faith your priest will refuse to baptize your baby. It simply means that he may want you to pause and think about why you really want your

4 baby baptized, and how you can share a

faith which you no longer practice yourself.

Baptism is a time of special joy and blessing, and it can serve as a reminder to us about our own faith and what it means to us.

NOT A CATHOLIC?

If you are a practicing Christian of another denomination, you will recognize how important baptism is. All Christians baptize new members of the family as Jesus taught us.

Being married to a Catholic, you will already have some understanding of the great importance Catholics attach to their faith and the

passing on of that faith to their children. When you were married, you will remember, your partner promised to do all that he or she could to bring up the children in the Catholic faith.

Your baby's baptism is the first and most important step you will take as parents in the life of faith of your child. It's important that you share this very special celebration together, and the Catholic Church wants you to feel welcomed and to participate as much as you wish.

NON-BELIEVER?

If you are not familiar with the Christian Church you may be puzzled by some of the ceremonies of baptism. But you will share your Christian partner's desire for what is best for

your baby. Your partner will be greatly helped by your support and encouragement.

Baptism doesn't mean that the Church is going to take over your baby's life. Neither does it mean that the priest is going to be forever checking up on your family life.

There are several moments during the baptism ritual when the parents play an active part. The Church very much hopes that you will feel welcome and at home so that you can join in without feeling uncomfortable or under pressure. If, for personal reasons, you don't wish to participate, the Church respects your wishes.

On the next few pages we will go through the ceremony. You may like to discuss together your part in the baptism of your child.

"Why does the Church insist on the baptism of babies? Wouldn't it be better to wait until the child can make up his or her own mind?"

...is a question that is sometimes asked. And it makes sense in a certain way, except that it ignores the dimension of your faith, and your desire to share with your child all that you have which is good and enriching in life. Your faith is just such a gift.

The Church has always baptized children soon after they are born as a sign of God's love. Some of the oldest baptistries contained a second, much smaller, font beside the main one. This was used by children who were too small to stand comfortably in the main font, which in those earliest days of the Church was always a deep pool.

We have already seen how baptism is God's way of showing love for every child. Baptism is the sign by which we are loved and "recreated" in God's own image. To suggest that a child should be left alone until old enough to make his or her own decision is really to miss the whole point of what baptism is about.

And the point, simply, is that just as we need the love of our parents to grow as a human being so do we need the love of our heavenly Father to grow as a child of God. Without love, we grow up unlovable. And the love we receive doesn't make us less free, but more free.

Baptizing a baby before the baby can make the slightest effort to do anything for his or her own salvation says very dramatically that all salvation is from God. Clearly, in the adult there must already be an element of faith—some sign of accepting God's love. But an infant is carried to the font by the faith of the family.



Questions people ask

"My husband's family are not Catholics but he would very much like his sister to be godmother to our baby son. Is this allowed?"

Godparents go back to the days when most adult converts to the Christian faith had no Christian parents. Godparents spoke up for the baptized person and, if necessary, helped him or her to grow in the faith. Today, in the vast majority of infant baptisms, these tasks belong primarily to the parents.

The Church insists that at least one godparent is a Catholic whose primary role remains that of supporting the parents in bringing up the child in the Christian faith. But most parents choose two. When this happens, provided one godparent is a Catholic, it is certainly allowable for someone who is not a Catholic to act as a witness to the baptism. It remains important, however, that your sister-in-law is baptized, confirmed, aged 16 or over, and of sufficient maturity to appreciate her role.

"How much does a baptism cost in the Catholic Church?"

Nothing. There is no charge for a baptism or any other church service. It is customary, however, for an offering to be made. This is at the discretion of the family and may be equivalent, for example, to the cost of your family Sunday lunch or an article of clothing for your baby. But if you cannot afford any offering, don't be anxious. It is a purely voluntary contribution.

"How soon should I have my baby baptized?"

The Church encourages Catholic families to have their children baptized as soon as possible after birth. This is because of Christ's teaching on the fundamental importance of baptism. If there is any danger of death, the baby should be baptized immediately and anyone can baptize. Pour water over the head of the baby, at the same time saying the words: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

The date of the baptism will depend upon the mother's health, for it is important that she is present,

and on the time needed for the preparation of the parents.

If you have experienced some difficulties with the practice of your faith, it may be helpful to allow a little longer in order to clarify your own beliefs and to rebuild a life of faith within your family.

"My mother says I have to give my baby girl the name of a saint but I don't agree. Who is right?"

In the first few centuries of the Church the custom grew up of changing one's name at baptism to express some Christian idea such as Irene (peace). In succeeding centuries the Church advised parents to call their children after a saint. These customs were confirmed in the 17th century when priests were instructed to discourage parents giving their children "strange, laughable, obscene, or idolatrous names." You are not obliged, then, to call your daughter after a saint (although there are plenty to choose from) but the Church still encourages you to choose a name which reflects your own Christian faith.

"My friend's baby was stillborn. What will happen to the baby?"

Your friend's baby is entrusted to the mysterious but infinitely kind and powerful love of God. If anyone has any doubts about such love, look at the crucifix. The cross proves that God's love is greater than any human mind can understand or follow.

Jesus told us that unless a person is born through water and the Spirit, he or she cannot enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5). At times in the past this has led some people to suggest that unbaptized infants pass into a state of "limbo"—where the baby is excluded from both heaven and hell. Such a suggestion, however, misses the whole point of God's love, for we are loved from the moment of conception. It is clear that very many who are unbaptized receive God's Spirit and so are welcomed into the kingdom of God. God's life is shared with us in various ways—of which baptism is the most important sign.



"My partner isn't a Christian and feels self-conscious and anxious about the ceremony and what we have to do as parents during the baptism. Will there be a practice beforehand?"

Your partner's anxiety is perfectly understandable. Even people who attend church services regularly can feel nervous and shy about taking a central part in an important ceremony such as their child's baptism. However, there is no need to be worried. The minister leading the celebration will guide you through it step by step and indicate exactly what part you play as parents. During the preparation for the baptism, don't be shy about mentioning any point or action which does worry either of you. It is important that the day of your baby's baptism doesn't become an ordeal but a family occasion to be enjoyed and celebrated by everyone present.

"My baby was baptized at birth because of illness. Can he be re-baptized in Church?"

Baptism is a once-in-a-lifetime event. It means that we become a member of God's family; we become a

Christian. We cannot become what we already are.

The baptism can't be repeated, but it is desirable that you have a celebration in Church and share in the prayers and blessings which are part of the baptismal ceremony. You may also wish to appoint godparents at the same time. Such a service is a lovely "thanksgiving" for the safety and well-being of your baby.

"I have not been to Church for a number of years and my seven-year-old daughter has never been baptized. Could I have her baptized at the same time as our baby?"

Yes, but you will need to allow time for her preparation. She will need to be given some instruction about baptism so that she understands what is happening. You may well feel that you would also find some form of preparation helpful in order to clarify any points about the faith which have given you difficulties.

People sometimes wonder about how to approach a priest. After Sunday Mass is not always the

best time as there are usually crowds of people around. Try to book a time convenient for both of you in order to meet in an atmosphere of quiet and peace.

"I'm a single parent. I want my baby baptized but am anxious about the kind of reception I'll get."

You will be given a friendly welcome by the priest or parish representative who will be happy to arrange for the baptism of your baby, don't worry at all. The Church will simply want to be assured, as with any other parent, of your own commitment to your child's Catholic upbringing.

"My wife goes to a different Christian Church and would like her minister to take part in the baptism. Is this possible?"

Yes. Your wife's minister may share in the prayers and readings at your baby's baptism. Discuss it with your priest; he will be happy to explain what is customary.



THE SIGNS AND SYMBOLISM OF BAPTISM



Sign of the Cross:

A sign on something shows its origins or ownership. The sign of the cross is the mark of Christians, for Jesus Christ died on the cross. Parents and godparents trace it on the child's forehead to show that the baby belongs to Christ, who now offers his help and grace to face and overcome the sufferings of life.



Water:

This is for cleansing and is a sign that our sins are washed away. Baptism cleanses us of original sin with which we are all born and, in the baptism of adults, of every sin committed prior to baptism. Water is also necessary for life and so is a sign, too, that the life of the risen Christ is ours.



Oils:

Oil of baptism is olive oil rubbed on the breast of the baby, just as athletes used to rub themselves with oil to strengthen and prepare for the fight ahead.

Oil of chrism is a mixture of olive oil and balsam (sweet-smelling ointment) and is rubbed on the crown of the head. It is a sign of sealing with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The profession of faith which you make on behalf of your child at baptism will later be confirmed personally by your child in the sacrament of confirmation, when oil of chrism will be used again.

The oils are blessed by the bishop on Holy Thursday.



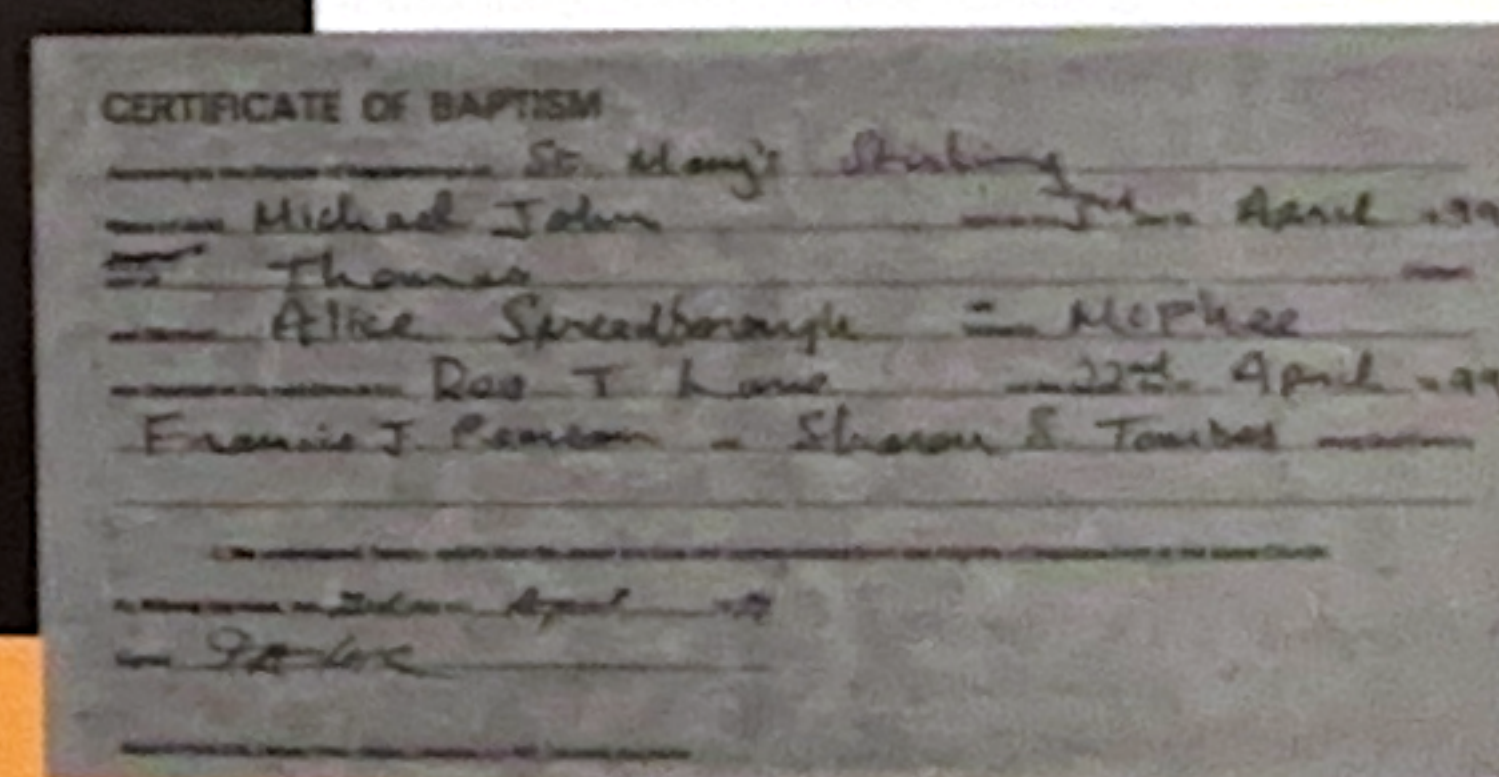
White Garment:

This garment (usually a shawl) is a relic of the new clothes worn by Christians after baptism in the first centuries. It is a sign of innocence and the new life of resurrection.



Candles:

These symbolize Christ—the Light of the World. The baptismal candle is lit from the paschal candle, which stands near the altar at Easter as a sign of the risen Christ. The baptismal candle reminds us that the light of Christ has entered the child's life; and its flame symbolizes the flame of faith which will burn through the life of your child.



Baptismal Register:

Your baby's baptism will be recorded in the parish Baptismal Register. In the years ahead, proof of baptism may be obtained in the form of a certificate issued on the basis of this registration. When your child is confirmed, married, or ordained, these will also be noted alongside this entry in the register.

The Day of Baptism

Normally your baby will be baptized solemnly in Church. It may be suggested that the baptism takes place during Sunday Mass, or at a customary time outside of Mass. Nobody need worry about where to stand or where to move during the celebration. The details are now left very much to the minister. Let the priest or deacon who baptizes be your guide in such matters.

Following careful thought and preparation you bring your baby to Church to ask for baptism. It is a public sign of your own faith and trust in God's love. The ceremonies of baptism speak powerfully of this love and as you follow the ritual by joining in the prayers and responses you are drawn deeper into God's love.

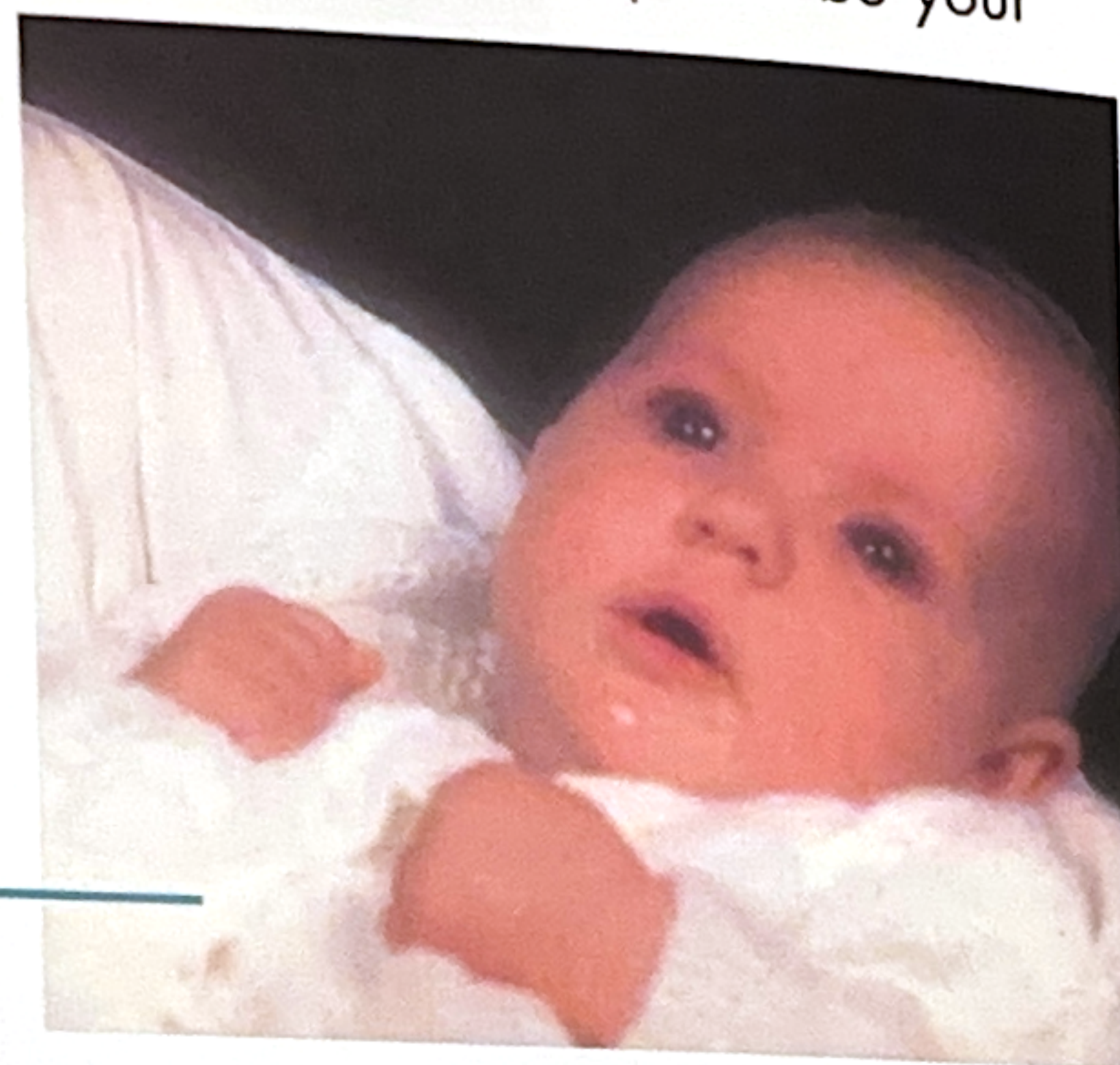
WELCOMING:

"When two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them."

Jesus Christ

The ceremony begins with a warm welcome to you and your family from the celebrant on behalf of the Christian community—the Church. He asks what name you have given your baby and whether you accept the responsibility of bringing up your child in the practice of the faith. Then with you—the parents and godparents—he greets your baby, not with a handshake but with the **sign of the cross**. You trace the cross on the forehead of your baby as a sign that this is a child of Christ. Having welcomed one another, everyone turns to the most important guest, Jesus Christ, who comes among those who gather in his name. In the gospel, Jesus speaks of the new life which baptism brings, and the minister may expand on this with a short talk.

Prayers are then offered for your baby, for you and your family. You may choose them or write them for yourselves. Finally, the prayers of the saints in heaven are asked for so that the baptism becomes a gathering of the whole family of the Church.



WASHING:

"Baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Jesus Christ

Water is the symbol of life, for without water there will be no life. Water also makes us clean. Baptism signifies the new life and the cleansing from sin won for us when Jesus rose from the dead.

To prepare for the baptism itself, the minister prays that your baby may be delivered from every evil and this prayer is reinforced by the anointing with **oil of baptism** as a sign of Christ's strengthening power. The water is blessed. Then the minister asks you to renew the vows which were made for you at your own baptism, at the same time reminding you of your duty to bring up your child as a good Christian.

Now comes the climax of the whole ceremony. The minister pours the baptismal water over your child's forehead three times, saying:

"N. I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."



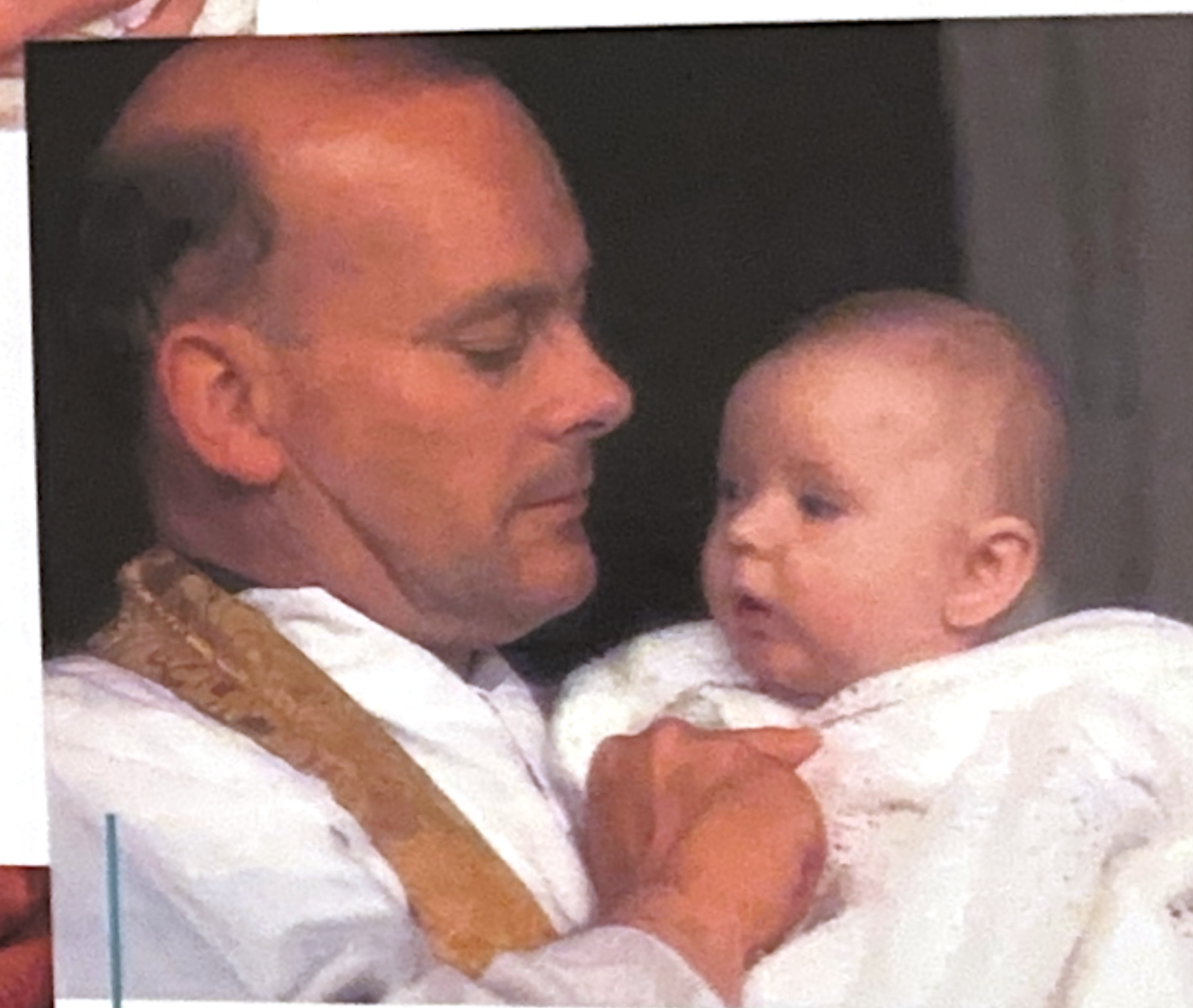
WORSHIPPING:

"Unless one is born through water and the Spirit, one cannot enter the kingdom of God."

Jesus Christ

Your baby is now a Christian. Following an ancient custom, your baby is anointed with **oil of chrism**. "Christ" means "anointed one"—for Jesus was given a special work to do. He suffered, died, and rose again in order to unite us to his heavenly Father.

Your baby has the special work of living as a member of Christ's body—the Church. In this, he or she will be helped by celebrating the other sacraments and, in particular, will take part in the Eucharist. The offering of thanks and praise to the Father which begins at Mass is the beginning of an eternal life of joy and total happiness.



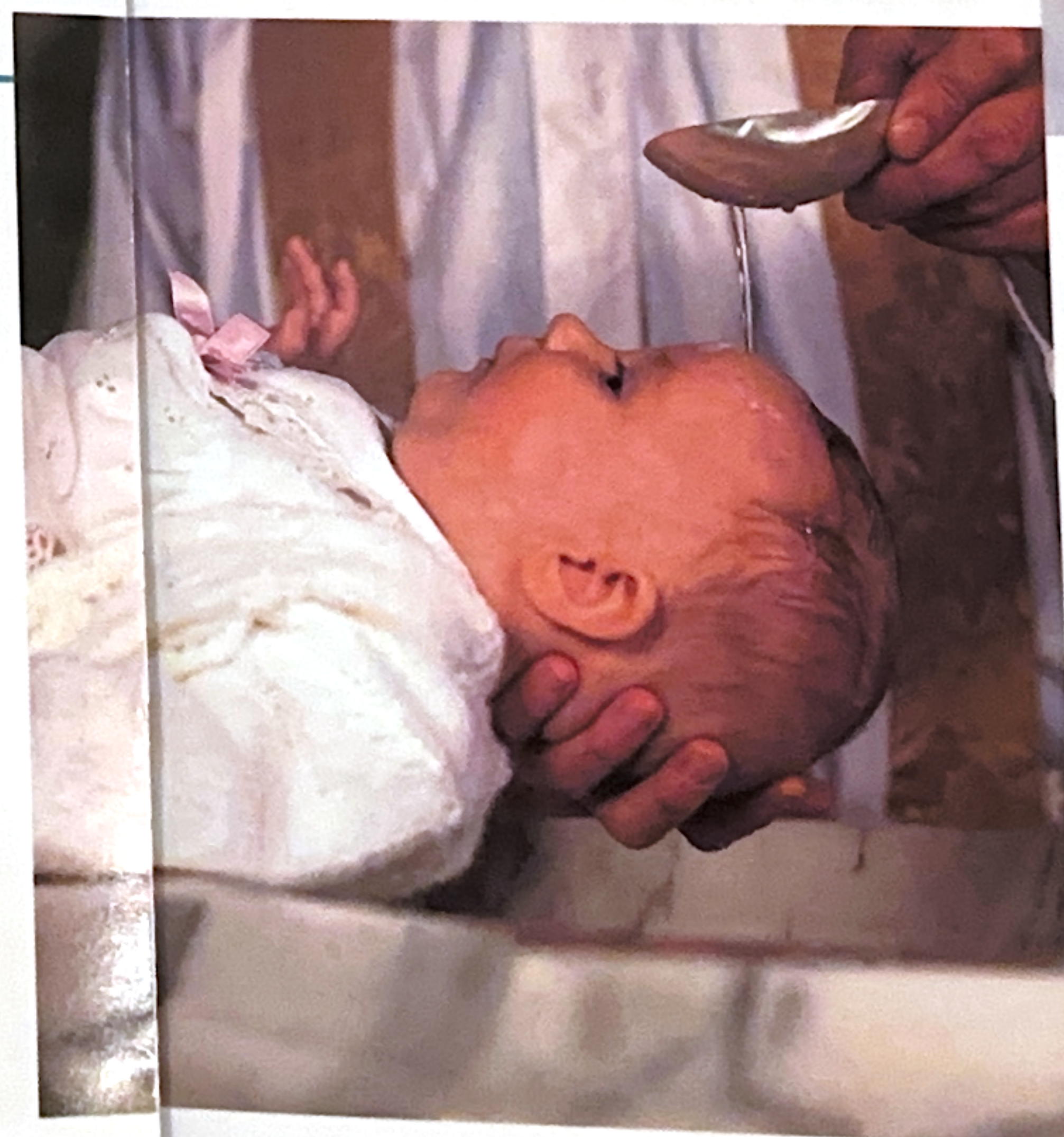
WITNESSING:

"You are the light of the world...Your light must shine so that everyone will give the praise to your Father in heaven."

Jesus Christ

Your baby has been given the Spirit of Christ and so can reveal this life in the world. As a sign of this power to witness to Christ, a **white garment** is wrapped around your baby to show that he or she is a new creation clothed in Christ. Finally, a member of the family, usually the father or godparent, is given a **candle** to light from the paschal candle. This symbolizes the light of Christ which will shine on and through your child for life.

The ceremony is now over, and the Church sends you on your future life together as a family. Everyone prays together the prayer Christ taught us—the Lord's Prayer. This is followed by special prayers for each parent and all who have joined in this joyful welcoming of a new Christian into the world.



EARLY DAYS of FAMILY LIFE

Although you have had nine months to prepare for it, a new baby's arrival can have a devastating effect on your life and routine.

Probably you have studied books and attended talks at the prenatal clinic which have given you plenty of information about baby's birth, the immediate post-delivery period, and how to wash and feed your noisy little newcomer. What may have been less well covered is discussion and thought about how your basic daily lives will be altered by becoming a family. For example, you will be less free to drop everything at any time to go out, or away for a day or two, without some extra thought and planning. Any new mother finds that everything seems to take her twice as long as before, and she seems to be coming to the end of one feeding session when it is time to begin all over again. You will find, too, that in the early weeks you may well become very tired as a result of broken nights and early morning feedings. New mothers who have been working until just before the baby is born often find, in the weeks that follow, that they miss the company and conversation with other adults each day. Partners, returning from work, now find they come home to chaos. Most new parents face these problems, and each couple has to reassess their life-style and adapt it accordingly.

A seed is sown

Your change in life-style offers an opportunity to think again, too, about your Christian faith. Often people don't bother so much about the practice of their faith when they leave home and get married. It may be that they didn't like the set-up in their local parish. They may have had some disagreement, or sometimes they have just let their faith slip into the background of their lives. For such Christians, the birth of a baby and the

question of baptism provides a focus for a new beginning.

When your baby comes home for the first time after birth he or she will begin to take on your own characteristics and personality. Your baby will become like you. That's why your attitudes and ideas are so important. And it is also why the celebrant, during the baptismal ceremony, asks about your intentions as parents and whether you intend to help your child to grow in the Christian life.

Making your own traditions

The seed of faith sown and watered in baptism needs your love and care if it is to flourish. The way you live and love, your relationship as a couple, and your beliefs, will all contribute to your child's experience of what it means to be a Christian.

For these reasons, it is vital to give thought and discussion to your partnership. If this is your first child, you will now have to begin to share each other with a newcomer. Try to share and understand each other's views and hopes about parenthood, and about sharing or not sharing the increased responsibilities. The arrival of the first child is always a critical moment for every couple who now have to turn their attention from themselves to a new creation: different expectations can lead to misunderstandings, and misunderstandings can lead to resentments.

Catholic family life is challenging, and sometimes parents feel almost overwhelmed by what is expected of them, especially when so many principles of Christianity are at variance with our society's attitudes today. Giving yourselves time and space to think and talk through ideas about the kind of Christian parenting you want to give your child is crucial.

Sharing

There are many good books about childcare which give advice about bringing up your child and not allowing the baby to monopolize all your attention and time. The essential point to remember is that baby is born into the family—the family doesn't join the baby! This means that your baby is encouraged to fit in with the routine and not operate a take-over bid. For example, try to organize your days so that you still share some quality time together as a couple.

Accepting each other's views and limitations makes it easier to work out how you will organize your family life. For example, if Dad just can't bring himself to change the baby, there is really no point in Mother feeling low and envious of the girl at the clinic whose husband does everything. After all, he may have other failings. Better for each to build on the positive points they find in their relationship.

Prayer

If you are both Christians, try to introduce a little shared prayer into your life together. Some people will feel shy about this at first, but to sit quietly together and talk with God about your feelings, hopes, and fears for a few minutes each day can be a wonderfully unifying experience. If your partner cannot be persuaded to join you, don't worry or feel that your marriage is second rate. Pray on your own with your child. You will find some practical suggestions about prayer in the article "You and God" on the next page.

Introducing Mass

For Catholics, a recurring problem can be what to do about Sunday Mass. It is very easy to be tempted to start going to Mass separately, leaving the baby or toddler at home. While this may appear to be a solution, think carefully before you make it your normal Sunday practice. First of all, it means that you



almost cease to share the Mass as a united family. It also means that when your baby grows older and you take him or her to Church, the child will find it strange and won't easily settle. Better by far to go together as a family as often as you can. Do not be put off by unkind looks or comments. If you sit near the end of the pew you can make a quick exit if your child really does become too noisy or fidgety.

Enjoy being a parent

Having a family can be great fun, but don't forget to siphon off a little time for yourselves. Both of you will need a change, and perhaps, an evening out, either together or independently. The occasional break from the regular routine of family life will do wonders for your morale and your partnership.

Follow all the new ideas and developments in childcare with interest, but don't allow yourselves to be conned into believing that without certain items you will be failures as parents. If your finances take a dive and you cannot buy everything you think your child needs, console yourself with the undisputed fact, acknowledged by every expert, that what all children need most in their lives are their parents' love and security. These are priceless gifts, which even your local department store doesn't stock.



YOUNG AND GOD

If you were asked to give your outstanding memories of childhood, the chances are that you would recall the things you and your family did rather than any special gifts or possessions. It is the family customs that stand out in our memories: the visit to Grandma, the Sunday lunch, the weekly jobs in the house given us by our parents...these are the memories that endure.

Whether your memories and experiences of childhood are good or bad, you will recognize by now their great influence on the way you think, your expectations, and your own ideas of what is an ideal family life.

The arrival of your own child has brought you to a crossroads. Until now other people—your parents, in-laws and friends—have shared with you their family customs. Now you have to begin to lay the foundations of your own family traditions. You find yourself moving over, from the passenger to the driver's seat.

Creating your family

This takes time. It means taking time with your partner. Many of you may have painful and unhappy memories of childhood. Time spent with one another can heal these tensions and lead to a rebirth in a very real sense: a rebirth to the experience of loving and being loved. And the climax of your love-making is sexual intercourse. This is the moment when you share in God's love-making and give birth to a new human being. You have become, in a very real sense, partners in God's creative Spirit in the world.

Bringing up a child also takes time—a lot of time! Take a small child for a walk,

for example, and you find it takes you twice as long as usual because the tot spots the tiny ant, the hidden soft moss, and the rich variety of texture and color of walls and stones. Your child will embarrass you by saying "Hello" to a stranger or unfriendly-looking business-type, and you will be amazed how often the person responds with a delighted smile.

Wasting time with God

It is this appreciation of life and the world around him or her that is so important when we come to teach our child to pray. Prayer has been described as "wasting time with God." But it is time well spent, for in coming closer to God we draw closer, too, to one another.

It is as dangerous to make family prayer a lengthy, heavy affair as it is to neglect it altogether. A suitable method is to encourage children at an evening gathering to say a little prayer of their own, about anything or anybody they choose. It may be for the goldfish to get better, for their friend's mother who is ill, or some other matter which concerns them.



Each adult present can perhaps say a little prayer in the same way. Their prayer can emphasize thanksgiving or a wider petition, showing by example the way we talk to God about our life and the world about us. These individual prayers can then be concluded with a couple of the best-known prayers—especially the Lord's Prayer.

Your baby's baptism is the birth of your family alive with faith in the eternal life promised by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. There will never be another family quite the same as yours, with all its strengths and weaknesses. Take time for yourselves and your faith; for each is irreplaceable.

THE BEST PRAYERS

The best prayers are those which come from the heart. But there are times when we find it very difficult to pray, and it is then that we need the help of prayers that we have learned "by heart." The following are among the most loved traditional prayers.

Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen

Hail Mary

Hail, Mary, full of grace! The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen

Doxology

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen

Act of Sorrow

O my God, I thank you for loving me. I am sorry for all my sins, for not loving others and not loving you. Help me to live like Jesus and not sin again. Amen

Morning Prayer

O my God, you love me,
you're with me night and day.
I want to love you always
in all I do and say.
I'll try to please you, Father.
Bless me through the day. Amen

Night Prayer

God, our Father, I come to say
thank you for your love today.
Thank you for my family
and all the friends you give to me.
Guard me in the dark of night
and in the morning send your light. Amen



A child who lives with criticism, learns to condemn.
A child who lives with hostility, learns to fight.
A child who lives with ridicule, learns to be shy.
A child who lives with shame, learns to feel guilty.
A child who lives with tolerance, learns to be patient.
A child who lives with encouragement, learns confidence.
A child who lives with praise, learns to appreciate.
A child who lives with fairness, learns justice.
A child who lives with security, learns to have faith.
A child who lives with approval, learns to like himself or herself.
A child who lives with acceptance and friendship,
learns to find love in the world.



*Think of the love that the Father has
lavished on us,
by letting us be called God's children;
and that is what we are.
My dear people, we are already the
children of God
but what we are to be in the future has
not yet been revealed;
all we know is, that when it is revealed
we shall be like him
because we shall see him as he really is.*

1 John 3:1-2
Sacraments/Baptism

 **Liguori**
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